

IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

Claim 1 (Original): A process for the preparation of a readily water-redispersible polymer powder by spray drying of an aqueous polymer dispersion, wherein the spray drying of the aqueous polymer dispersion is effected in the presence of a spray assistant A which was obtained by reacting a dihydroxydiphenyl sulfone with from 0.5 to 5 mol of an aliphatic aldehyde of 1 to 6 carbon atoms and from 0.4 to 2 mol of sodium sulfite per mole of dihydroxydiphenyl sulfone at from 90 to 180°C.

Claim 2 (Original): The process according to claim 1, wherein the dihydroxydiphenyl sulfone used is 4,4'-dihydroxydiphenyl sulfone or a mixture comprising it.

Claim 3 (Currently Amended): The process according to ~~either of claims~~ claim 1 and 2, wherein the reaction of the dihydroxydiphenyl sulfone is effected in aqueous solution under pressure.

Claim 4 (Original): The process according to claim 3, wherein the aqueous solution obtained after the reaction is brought to a pH of  $\geq 7$ .

Claim 5 (Currently Amended): The process according to ~~any of claims~~ claim 1 to 4, wherein the spray assistant A is used in the form of a mixture with at least one other spray assistant B.

Claim 6 (Original): The process according to claim 5, wherein the total amount of the spray assistant comprises  $\geq 50\%$  by weight of spray assistant A.

Claim 7 (Currently Amended): The process according to ~~any of claims~~ claim 1 to 6, wherein from 0.1 to 40 parts by weight of spray assistant A are used per 100 parts by weight of polymer.

Claim 8 (Currently Amended): The process according to ~~any of claims~~ claim 1 to 7, wherein the polymer comprises

from 50 to 99.9% by weight of esters of acrylic and/or methacrylic acid with alkanols of 1 to 12 carbon atoms and/or styrene, or  
from 50 to 99.9% by weight of styrene and/or butadiene, or  
from 50 to 99.9% by weight of vinyl chloride and/or vinylidene chloride, or  
from 40 to 99.9% by weight of vinyl acetate, vinyl propionate and/or ethylene incorporated in the form of polymerized units.

Claim 9 (Currently Amended): The process according to ~~any of claims~~ claim 1 to 8, wherein the polymer has a glass transition temperature of from -60 to +150°C.

Claim 10 (Currently Amended): The process according to ~~any of claims~~ claim 1 to 9, wherein, in addition to the spray assistant A, at least one antiblocking agent is used for the spray drying.

Claim 11 (Currently Amended): A polymer powder obtainable by the process according to ~~any of claims~~ claim 1 to 10.

Claim 12 (Currently Amended): The ~~use of~~ method of using a polymer powder according to claim 11 as a binder in adhesives, sealing compounds, synthetic resin renders, paper coating slips, surface coating compositions and other coating materials or as an additive in mineral binders.

Claim 13 (Original): An aqueous polymer dispersion obtainable by redispersing polymer powder according to claim 11 in an aqueous medium.

Claim 14 (Currently Amended): The ~~use of~~ method of using a reaction product which was obtained by reacting a dihydroxydiphenyl sulfone with from 0.5 to 5 mol of an aliphatic aldehyde of 1 to 6 carbon atoms and from 0.4 to 2 mol of sodium sulfite per mole of dihydroxydiphenyl sulfone at from 90 to 180°C, as a spray assistant in the spray drying of aqueous polymer dispersions.